

For Release: August 11, 2006

Contact: Ken Burton, 202-208-5657

Joan Jewett, 503-231-6211

[Questions & Answers](#)

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ISSUES FINAL DECISION
ON RESIDENT CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a Record of Decision and final rule today that will allow state wildlife agencies, landowners, and airports more flexibility in controlling resident Canada goose populations. The Record of Decision and final rule were published in the August 10 Federal Register.

The Service action is in response to growing impacts from overabundant populations of resident Canada geese, which can damage property, agriculture, and natural resources in parks and other areas.

"The Service worked closely with State fish and wildlife agencies and the Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Service to provide a full range of options for managing resident Canada goose populations consistent with health, safety and environmental demands," said Service Director Dale Hall. "This final rule offers the essential flexibility needed for effective natural resource management."

Resident Canada geese typically stay in the same area or migrate short distances. There is no evidence that resident Canada geese breed with migratory Canada geese that nest in northern Canada and Alaska. The rapid rise of resident Canada geese populations has been attributed to a number of factors. Key among them is that most resident Canada geese live in temperate climates with relatively stable breeding habitat conditions. They tolerate human and other disturbances, have a relative abundance of habitat such as mowed grass and waterways, and fly short distances for winter compared with migratory Canada goose populations. The absence of waterfowl hunting and natural predators in urban areas has also contributed to perpetuating overabundance.

In the Atlantic Flyway, the resident Canada goose population has increased an average of 2 percent per year over the last four years and was estimated at 1.15 million resident Canada geese this past spring. In the Mississippi Flyway, giant Canada geese have increased an average of 5 percent per year since 1997 and this year almost 1.7 million were tallied, a 7 percent increase from last year.

The new regulatory program consists of three components. The first component creates control and depredation orders for airports, landowners, agricultural producers and public health officials that are designed to address resident Canada goose depredation and damage while managing conflict. This component will allow take of resident Canada geese without a federal permit provided certain reporting and monitoring requirements are fulfilled.

The second component consists of expanded hunting methods and opportunities designed to increase the sport harvest of resident Canada geese. Under this component, States could choose to expand shooting hours and allow hunters to use electronic calls and unplugged shotguns during a portion of the early September resident Canada goose seasons.

The third component consists of a new regulation authorizing the Director to implement a resident Canada goose population control program, or “management take.” Management take is defined as a

special management action that is needed to reduce certain wildlife populations when traditional and otherwise authorized management measures are unsuccessful, not feasible, or not applicable in preventing injury to property, agricultural crops, public health, and other interests. Under management take, the take of resident Canada geese outside the existing sport hunting seasons (September 1 to March 10) would be authorized and would enable States to authorize a harvest of resident Canada geese between August 1 and August 31. Management take would be available to States in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Central Flyway following the first full operational year of the other new regulations.

Some of the new regulations will not apply to Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Washington, Oregon and Utah and parts of Wyoming, Montana, Colorado and New Mexico. Specifically, only the airport control order, the nest and egg depredation order, and the public health control order will be available to the Pacific Flyway States. The Pacific Flyway requested these States not be included because they have fewer issues with resident Canada geese. For agricultural issues, States in the Pacific Flyway will continue to apply for Federal permits. Only State wildlife agencies and Tribal entities in the Atlantic, Central, and Mississippi Flyways are eligible to implement all of the new components for resident Canada geese management.

For specific details on the final rule, readers should consult the August 10 Federal Register.

The Service received more than 2,700 written comments on the 2002 draft Environmental Impact Statement and 2,900 public comments on the August 2003 proposed rule.

Expansion of existing annual hunting season and the issuance of control permits have all been used to reduce resident goose numbers with varying degrees of success. While these approaches have provided relief in some areas, they have not completely addressed the issues.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

-FWS-

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
Visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov>.*